

## **AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS**

1. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:
  - providing an offer, via an interface at a vending machine, for a benefit in exchange for an email address;
  - receiving, via the interface at the vending machine and in response to the providing of the offer, an email address; and
  - after receiving the email address, transmitting a promotional message to the received email address, in which the promotional message includes a code that is redeemable for a benefit at the vending machine.
2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, in which the receiving, via [[an]]the interface at [[a]]the vending machine, [[an]]of the email address, comprises:
  - receiving a plurality of email addresses via the interface at the vending machine.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
  - validating the received email addresses.
- 4-6. (Cancelled)
7. (Currently amended) A method, comprising:
  - receiving, by a controller and from a representative associated with a location at which a vending machine is placed, a set of email addresses;
  - identifying, by the controller, at least one the vending machine ~~to be~~ associated with the set of email addresses;
  - determining, by the controller, at least one rule defining restrictions on when a message may be sent to at least one of the email addresses; and
  - sending, by the controller, a message via email transmission to each of the set of email addresses in compliance with the restrictions on when a message may be sent, in which the message includes content that promotes the vending machine.

8. (Currently amended) The method of claim 7, in which the sending [[a]]of the message via email transmission to each of the set of email addresses, comprises:

sending the message to a predetermined address;  
determining whether approval has been received; and  
sending a message via email transmission to each of the set of email addresses only if approval has been received.

9. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising:

receiving data representing a preference of a customer;  
determining an email address from the set of email addresses that corresponds to the customer;  
determining a second message according to the preference; and  
sending the second message via email transmission the email address that corresponds to the customer.

10. (Original) The method of claim 7, further comprising:

generating a promotion for the vending machine; and  
in which the step of sending a message comprises:  
accessing a database of consumer preferences;  
determining, from the database, a set of recipients that have preferences corresponding to the promotion; and  
determining a respective email address for each of the set of recipients;  
and  
sending a message via email transmission to each of the respective email addresses, in which the message indicates the promotion.

11. (Original) The method of claim 10, in which generating a promotion for the vending machine comprises:

generating a promotion for the vending machine based on at least one revenue management factor.

12. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the benefit comprises a free unit of product dispensed by the vending machine upon input of the code into an interface of the vending machine.
13. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the representative comprises a representative of a company associated with the location, wherein the set of e-mail addresses comprises a set of e-mail addresses for employees of the company, and wherein the at least one rule is established by the company.
14. (New) The method of claim 13, wherein at least a portion of the content of the message that promotes the vending machine comprises content defined by at least one of (i) the company, and (ii) one or more of the employees of the company.
15. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the content of the message that promotes the vending machine comprises an indication of a code that is operable, upon being input into the vending machine, to cause the vending machine to dispense a discounted unit of a product.
16. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the content of the message that promotes the vending machine comprises an indication that a unit of beverage and a unit of snack may be purchased at the vending machine for one dollar.
17. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the sending of the message via email transmission to each of the set of email addresses is conducted in response to a triggering of one or more sales thresholds at the vending machine.
18. (New) The method of claim 7, wherein the sending of the message via email transmission to each of the set of email addresses is conducted in response to an inventory level of a product in the vending machine.
19. (New) A vending machine, comprising:

a processor;  
an interface in communication with the processor; and  
a memory in communication with the processor, the memory storing instructions  
that when executed by the processor result in:

providing, via the interface, an offer for a benefit in exchange for an e-mail address;  
receiving, via the interface and in response to the providing of the offer, an e-mail address; and  
causing, after receiving the e-mail address via the interface, a transmission of a promotional message to the received e-mail address, wherein the promotional message includes an indication of a code that is redeemable for a benefit at the vending machine.

20. (New) The vending machine of claim 19, wherein the memory further stores instructions that when executed by the processor further result in:

receiving, via the interface and after the causing of the transmission of the promotional message, an indication of the code;  
verifying the code; and  
providing, in response to the receiving of the code and in the case that the code is verified successfully, the benefit.

21. (New) The vending machine of claim 19, wherein the benefit comprises one or more of (i) gasoline, (ii) an electronic download, (iii) internet access, and (iv) clothes washing services.